

Russia registers first coronavirus death

March 19 2020



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Russia registered the first death of a patient infected with the coronavirus on Thursday, an elderly woman who had been hospitalised in Moscow, health officials said.

The 79-year-old, who had tested positive, was hospitalised on March 13 and had several other conditions including diabetes and heart problems,

the Moscow health department said in a statement.

She died of pneumonia while being treated in an intensive care unit, it said. People she had contact with have been isolated, the statement added.

"The elderly patient had a host of chronic diseases," Svetlana Krasnova, head doctor at Moscow's hospital No. 2 for infectious diseases, was quoted as saying in the statement.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin added on Twitter that "unfortunately, we have the first loss from the coronavirus infection."

Russia has reported 147 cases of the novel coronavirus, according to official figures Thursday.

Moscow authorities on Wednesday urged elderly residents to stay away from crowded places like cafes and shopping centres.

President Vladimir Putin this week said the coronavirus situation is "generally under control" in the country, and the government has promised to step up testing.

Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin on Thursday called on people to "cut down on contacts as much as possible" during a government meeting.

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Citation: Russia registers first coronavirus death (2020, March 19) retrieved 20 March 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-03-russia-registers-coronavirus-death.html>

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